

THE FIRST WEEK Level 4 DRAMA

The roots of Greek drama

- An introduction to Greek paganism and their concept of religion.
- Dionysus the god of wine and fertility.
- The idea of conflict between gods and humans and between gods themselves.
- An idea about Greek myths as a basic material of their drama.
- Explaining how the Greek rituals contained the seeds of drama.

The four main stages of the development of Greek drama:

- 1-**Improvisations**: there were no written texts. No dramatic action or acting.
- 2-**The dithyrambs**: lyric poetry in honor of Dionysus. Dithyrambs were only reciting singing. . Dancing by the choral and the leader.
- 3- The appearance of **Aeschylus** (625-585): he is the first to write dithyrambs with subject and title. He is the first to ask the leader of the choral to tell a story and the choral comment and sing.
- 4- The appearance of **Thespis**: came along with the establishment of theatre government contests. He added the prologue and line. He added the first actor to play several roles by using masks. He is considered the true inventor of acting by introducing the **first actor** in the history of Greek drama. He made the dialogue more dramatic.

Aristotle's theory of dramatic action:

- The importance of **Aristotle's poetics** as a main source of the theoretical history of Greek drama and theatre.
- The idea of **imitation** as an instinct in human beings.
- Imitation as one of human's chief methods of learning.
- **Drama is a representation of man in action.**
- Dramatic action is not composed of merely **physical** movement, for it depicts, as well, **mental** and **psychological** activities which motivate external behavior with total range of **feelings, thoughts, and deeds.**
- The dramatic action of a play has to have a **beginning, middle, and an end.**
- The dramatic action of a play must be **complete and self-contained**, which means that everything necessary for understanding the action must be included in the play itself.
- Dramatic action should be **purposeful** and well organized in order to create a specific response, such as **pity and fear** in tragedy and **joy and ridicule** in comedy.
- The purpose of the dramatic action may be **complex or simple**, but the events, the characters, the mood, and all other elements should be shaped with a dominant purpose in mind.